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# COMIC SHOP NEWS



## THE GRAVE

# The Grave: Dan Fraga's Newest Undertaking

A lot of comics fans remember *Dan Fraga* as an outstanding artist of superhero titles for Image, Extreme Studios, DC, and Marvel. But it's been a while since Fraga was actively involved in creating comics. He never lost his love for the medium, however, and it's that love of comics that has inspired him to return with *The Grave*, an original graphic novel with a unique structure.

"*The Grave* is about transformation, the journeys that we take in life, and hopefully lessons that we learn from them," Fraga said. "In *The Grave*, we follow three friends on their last weekend of summer before they start high school as freshmen. These friends celebrate their last days by going camping in the hills of their hometown. During their first night, they find a buried trunk that contains items including a cigar box filled with interesting trinkets (a coin, a pocket knife, a manga comic, a ring, a baseball card, and a watch). It's through these trinkets that we learn about the life of who the trinkets belonged to—the person who is buried in the grave."

"I begin *The Grave* with a quote from Mark Twain: 'The fear of death follows from the fear of life. A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.' This story examines this idea."

The coming-of-age tale isn't your typical graphic novel: Fraga created it as a challenge to himself. He committed to produce a panel a day for year—and *The Grave* is the result of that commitment. "The idea of a panel per day came from necessity," Fraga said. "I had no idea that it was the solution to my creative aches until I read a book called *The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle* by Steven Pressfield. When I decided I was going to actualize *The Grave*, I was working a full-time job at Mattel, driving three hours each day, and had three kids and a wife waiting for me at home. You might call me crazy for even trying to create a graphic novel under those variables. What I found crazy was how much angst and creativity were bottled up inside my head and having only one way to relieve that: by creating something!"

"*The Grave* is one of the ideas I've had that echoed in my head on a daily basis. It was maddening. I loved my job at Mattel, and I was able to put my full creativity towards my job, but at the end of the day, those characters were their toys. I wanted to be able to breathe soul into my own creations. I kept thinking about starting *The Grave* and kept stalling out with the obvious reasons or excuses of not having enough time."

"I don't even recall how I happened upon the Pressfield book, but it was like getting hit by a bolt of lightning. He was literally talking to me and about my struggles. He basically says that if you really want to create something, you've got to prioritize it and make a plan with the time you do have. I realized that I could draw a panel a day and get *The Grave* done in one year. So in the fall of 2013, I set out my



plan and stuck with it. Don't get me wrong: It wasn't easy. It caused some fights. There were days I didn't want to do it. Nonetheless, I stuck with it. What I found artistically is that I ended up making the panels more detailed as I went along, which made for some long drawing sessions. I learned so much from the process of creating *The Grave*."

The unusual history of the project also led to an unusual format for the graphic novel. "*The Grave* is a square. It has four panels per page. At first, the format that I originally put *The Grave* out in (Instagram square of one panel) presented some problems when we decided to go to print, but with some experimentation we found a format that works and makes it pleasingly unique."

The story of *The Grave* seems like one that would definitely appeal to fans of Stephen King's "The Body" (which inspired the film *Stand by Me*). It's not derivative, but it seems like both works hit some of the same creative notes. Are there any similarities? "Absolutely," Fraga said. "*Stand by Me*, *The Goonies*, and any stories or films that focus on friendship and coming of age have always hit me in the heart. This story is my ode to those stories. The cherry on top is that parts of *The Grave* are based on my childhood pals and our experiences."

The coming-of-age tale has a lengthy literary history; are there other works of this sort that have appealed to Fraga? "Spider-man has always been my favorite character. There were so many relatable parallels in Spidey's stories that I felt like he was there to show us lessons in how to become decent young men. In comics, he represents the ultimate in coming-of-age stories."

Fraga's no newcomer to comics; his comics premiere dates back more than a quarter of a century, although he hasn't been doing much in the medium in recent years. "My first professional work was a pin-up in *Brigade Vol 1 #2* in 1992. I was first hired by Rob Liefeld in late 1991 and relocated to his studio in spring of 1992. I met Rob in 1989 and basically bugged him to hire me on a weekly basis via fax and phone calls. I consider myself so very lucky that he did hire me and that I was part of comics history with Image comics. I worked with Image, Marvel, and DC until I left comics in 2003."

"I love storytelling, and I really wanted to advance my skill set, so I moved into television and film. I started working as a storyboard artist and visual consultant in 2003, then worked my way into second unit directing on commercials and music videos, then later started directing cartoons and TV shows. I started directing animation on an MTV show called *The Hard Times of RJ Berger*, then was hired by HBO to direct two seasons of *The Ricky Gervais Show*. From there I went to work at Mattel as a supervising director on their shows *Monster High*, *Everafter High*, *Max Steel*, *Hot Wheels*, and *Barbie*. Currently I'm back to my passion of storytelling through drawing as a storyboard artist on the CW's *Legacies*, DC's *Doom Patrol*, BET's *Tales*, and Hulu's *American Saga*. I love what I do, and drawing everyday keeps my skills sharp."

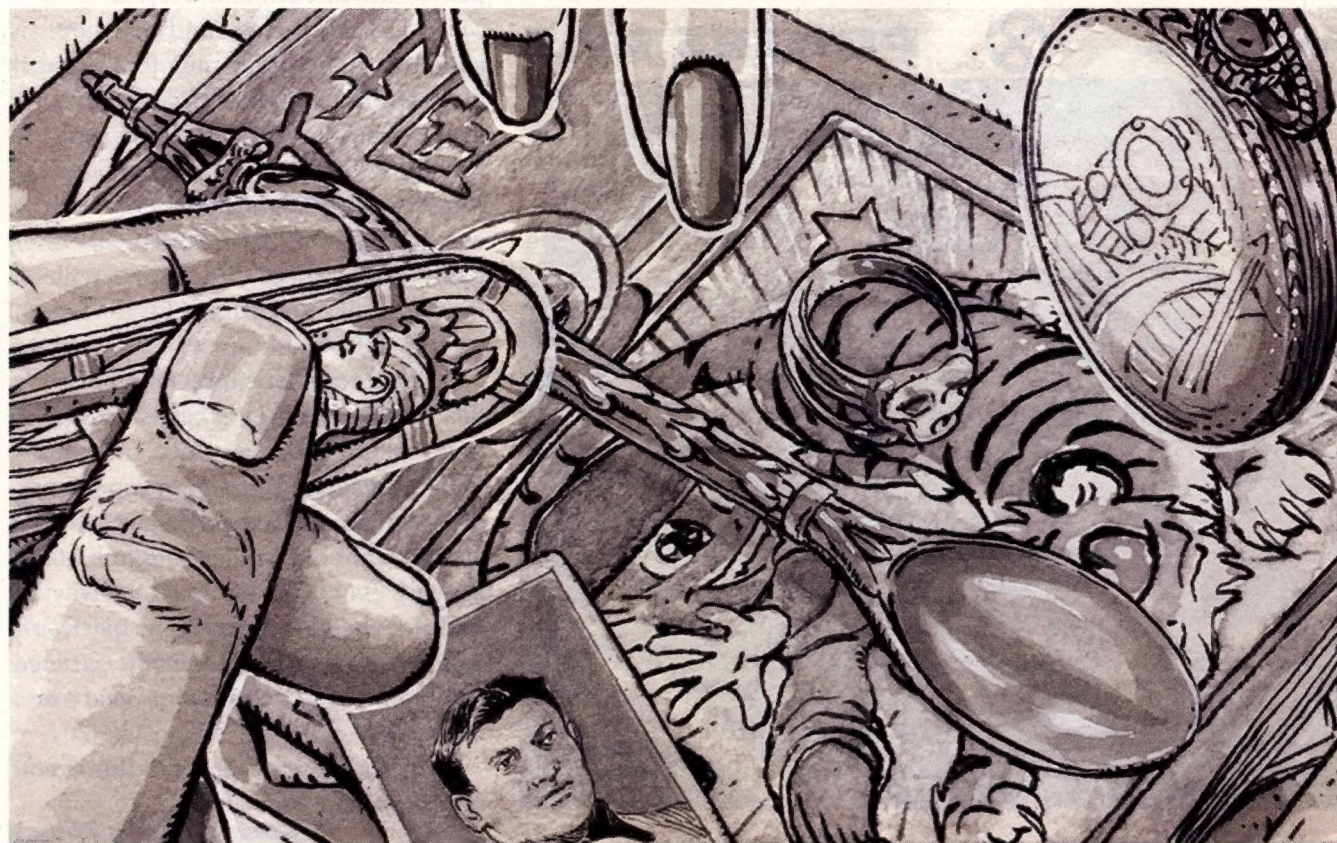
While *The Grave* marks Fraga's return to comics after an absence of almost 15 years, you won't have to wait another 15 years to see more work from him. "Last fall, I had the pleasure of working with Rob Liefeld on what was then a very top-secret project. He brought over some pencilled pages from the project to my house, and he asked if I wanted to ink them. Of course I said yes! The pages turned out to be from the first issue of *Major X*. I had a blast inking over Rob's pencils."

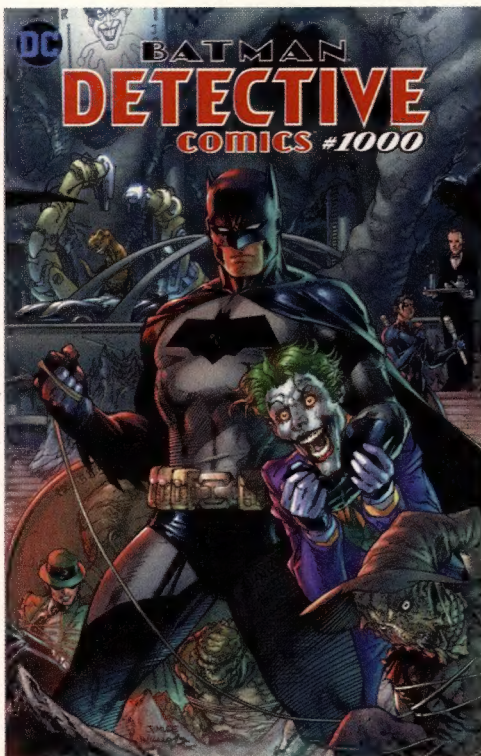
"I'm also drawing four covers for *GI Joe*, and afterward I'll start working on bringing my characters from *Black Flag* back to the page. The story is written. Now it's time for me to draw it!"

*The Grave*, a 112-page original graphic novel by Dan Fraga, is scheduled for June 5th release.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy of your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!





## Watching the Detective

If you're a reader of superhero comics, you've undoubtedly taken a look at DC's landmark *Detective Comics #1000*, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the introduction of Batman. Most likely, you even picked up one (or more!) of the various versions that were offered through comic shops across the country.

But odds are you also checked out some of those ultra-limited exclusive covers created in small quantities, only to discover that you couldn't get them... or couldn't afford them!

Well, DC has a solution.

*Detective Comics #1000: The Deluxe Edition HC*, slated for June release, will present the entirety of this gala issue in hardcover—but it will also add a heaping helping of bonus pages, with reproductions of all 32 exclusive covers, including ultra-limited variants by Alex Ross, Stanley "Artgerm" Lau, Neal Adams, Alex Ross, and other artists, plus the nine decade-themed variant covers created by artists such as Steve Rude, Michael Cho, Jim Steranko, Bernie Wrightson, Frank Miller, Tim Sale, Jock, and Greg Capullo.

**COMIC SHOP NEWS**  
Published weekly  
since 1987 by Comic Shop News, Inc.

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Printed by Transcontinental Interglobe, Beauceville, QC, Canada

# COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by Comic Shop News  
in cooperation with [newsarama.com](http://newsarama.com)

The hardcover will also include Batman tribute art by such artists as Jason Fabok, Mikel Janin, Amanda Conner, and Paul Mounts.

In addition, this deluxe hardcover will add a new story by Robert Venditti & Stephen Segovia, "Table for Two." This 12-page tale pits Batman against a Gotham City gauntlet of his most dangerous rogues, as Two-Face unites half of the Gotham underworld to eradicate the Dark Knight once and for all. (This story will mark Venditti's Batman debut.)

*Detective #1000: The Deluxe Edition HC* is scheduled for June 12th release.

## X Marks the Spot for Hickman

Jonathan Hickman is returning to Marvel!

Okay, that's not exactly news—after all, Marvel has been running full-page teasers in recent comics promoting Hickman's return.

What is news is that Hickman's return will land him smack-dab in the middle of the Marvel mutantverse, where he'll be writing two new biweekly limited series: *House of X* and *Powers of X*.

"We are excited to have Jon back with the Marvel family, and we could not have asked for a better creative team to

help usher the X-Men into a whole new era," Marvel Editor-in-chief CB Cebulski said. "While we can't reveal too much about the story just yet, these new stories will redefine the X-Men and their place in the Marvel Universe. This is a historic moment both new and passionate fans won't want to miss."

These new series will be the focal point of Marvel's mutantverse relaunch; according to Marvel, the series will build on the entirety of Marvel X-Men continuity, from the team's premiere in *X-Men #1* in 1963 to recent events like *X-Men Disassembled*. Hickman will be joined on the books by artists Pepe Larraz and RB Silva.

The two biweekly series will alternate, with a new issue of each series appearing every other week. That means that readers will get new X-Men X-titles every week throughout the summer, beginning in July with the release of *House of X #1*.



## Donny Cates Administers Absolute Carnage This Summer

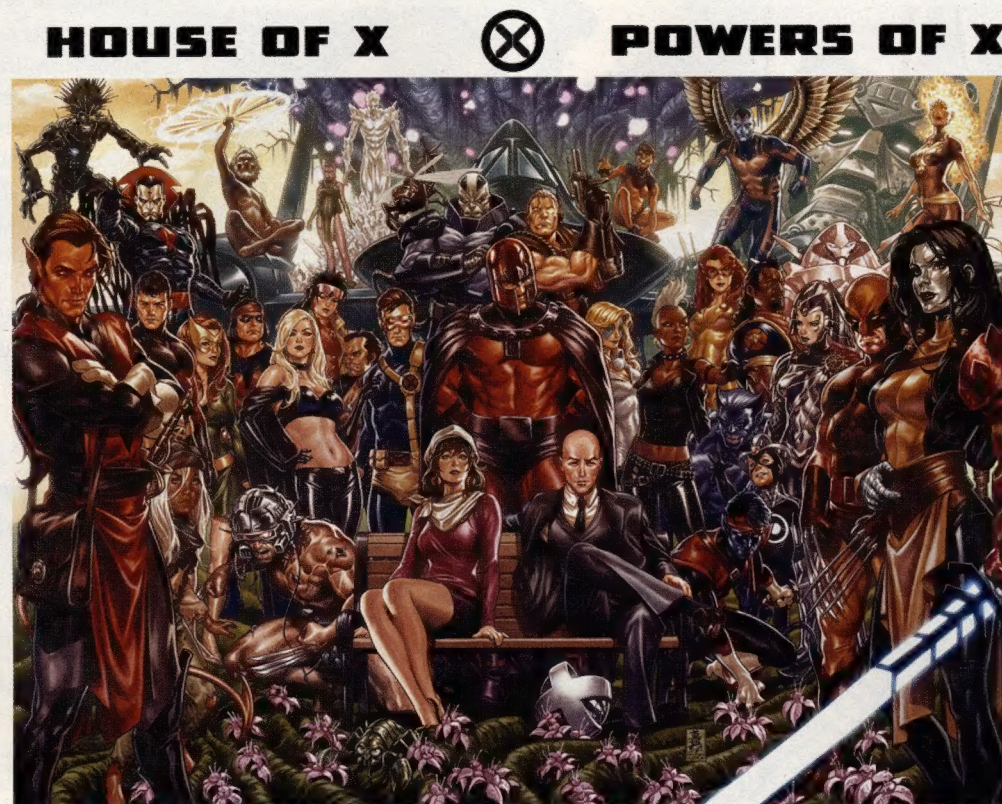
Superstar writer Donny Cates has propelled *Venom* back to the top of Marvel's sales charts—and now he's about to do the same thing for Carnage!

*Absolute Carnage*, a major Marvel summer event written by Cates, will kick off with a preview in *Free Comic Book Day 2019 Spider-Man/Venom #1*, available on May 4th through participating comic shops, but readers will have to wait until August for the big event itself.

"Cletus Kasady is back, and he is deadlier than he's ever been," Donny Cates said in a Marvel video announcement. "*Absolute Carnage* encompasses every single character who has ever worn a symbiote and every symbiote that has ever been, going all the way back to when Peter found the black suit. Going from there to *Maximum Carnage* to *Venomized* to everything... everyone is a target."

Look for more news about this event in upcoming issues of CSN.

**Comic Shop News**



## Dynamite Gets Carbon-ated

First it was a book, then a television series... and now *Richard K. Morgan's Altered Carbon* is about to become a graphic novel!

Even better, *Altered Carbon: Download Blues HC* isn't an adaptation of the novel or the TV series; instead, it's an original graphic novel by Morgan (his first major new story in over a decade) and co-writer *Rik Hoskin*, with art by *Ferran Sellares*.

In the world of *Altered Carbon*, technology has advanced to allow human consciousness to be stored digitally. Following death or for other reasons, people can be transferred into new bodies, nicknamed "sleeves." This has drastically overhauled the criminal justice system, as well as unlocking interstellar travel. Series protagonist Takeshi Kovacs is a former soldier turned PI, plenty experienced with sleeves himself.

Morgan's novel *Altered Carbon*, released in 2002, was a best-seller that went on to win the *Philip K. Dick* Award. Morgan wrote two sequel novels, *Broken Angels* and *Woken Furies*. In 2018, Netflix brought *Altered Carbon* to television; the first season was so well received that a second season is in the works.

"The mythos *Richard K. Morgan* has created is so rich, it's easy to see why the novels are so successful and how it has become a huge hit on Netflix," Dynamite Publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "We're honored that Richard is allowing us to work with him to create new stories to continue to grow this universe. Dynamite has experienced great success with retailers and fans, creating original stories of popular prose series in the graphic novel format, striving to offer something wholly original for hardcore fans. *Altered Carbon* is one of the true masterpieces of sci-fi, and we can't wait for fans to check out this story!"

"When you go to Dynamite for a sequential art incarnation of your much-loved anti-hero, you know you're not going to get short-changed. These, after all, are the guys who took on *The Boys* without blinking. No compromise, no punches pulled," Morgan said. "I couldn't wish for a happier, more hard-boiled home in which to have Takeshi Kovacs make his comic book debut."

*Altered Carbon: Download Blues HC* is scheduled for mid-May release.



## CSNsider

• *Mark Waid, Javier Rodriguez, & Alvaro Lopez* are working on a definitive *History of the Marvel Universe* six-issue limited series as part of Marvel's 80th anniversary celebration this year. *Steve McNiven* will supply the cover art for the series, which will chronicle the entire complex, expansive history of the Marvel Universe.

• *Kurt Busiek & Alex Ross*, the creators of the acclaimed series *Marvels* (currently being republished in annotated single-issue form), will reunite later this year to create a new *Marvels* oneshot in recognition of *Marvels'* 25th anniversary. The tale will take place after the events of *Marvels* and presumably will continue its focus on *Daily Bugle* reporter *Phil Sheldon*, who gives readers a ground-level, common-man view of famous events in Marvel history. Once it is released, the oneshot will be added to future collected editions of *Marvels*.

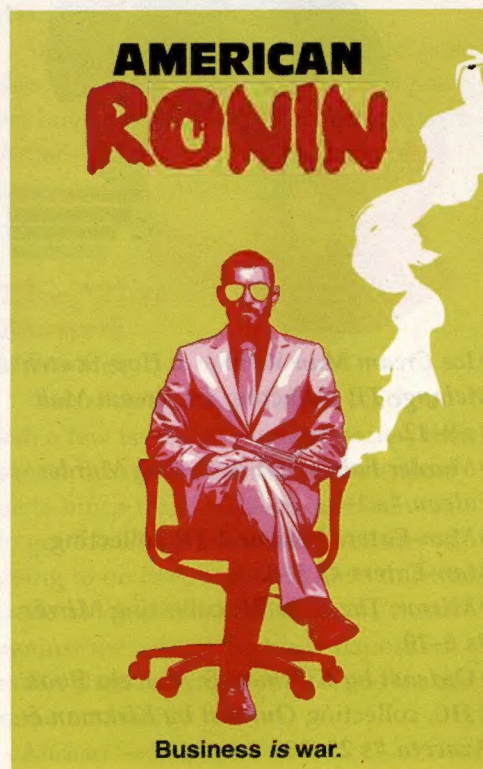
• Writers *Jason Aaron & Al Ewing* will work together on a *Valkyrie* series set after the events of *War of the Realms*.

• *Tini Howard & Kei Zama* will bring back *Death's Head* in a new limited series later this year.

• Bad news for fans of DC's Silver and Bronze Age collected editions: DC Co-publisher *Dan DiDio* has confirmed that the publisher is cutting a number of collections and is changing its approach to collecting this material. "This decision was made to make way for even more books highlighting stories and series from these moments in time," DiDio said. "Comics, never collected in color

or ever before, will first see print in smaller volumes before being collected (if demand dictates) in omnibus form. This is to open a wider array of books and themes for collections from the past. We have so much great material, and we are committed to collecting it in the best forms possible to reach as many fans as possible..." DC's list of cancelled collected editions (which will not be resolicited, according to DC) includes *Batman Brave and Bold Omnibus Volume 3 HC*, *Justice League of America Bronze Age Omnibus Volume 3 HC*, *Batman: Faces in the Shadows Essential TP*, *Batman: The Long Halloween Modern Classics HC*, and *Green Lantern: Earth One Volume 1 TP*. In response to rumors that other collections were on the chopping block, DiDio said, "There are no changes to our plans to collect *Joker, House of Secrets Volume 2*, and *Jack Kirby Bronze Age* in omnibus form. All are on schedule, so no need to be concerned."

• *AfterShock* continues its acclaimed original anthology hardcover series with the release of *AfterShock Shock Volume 2 HC*, edited by *Eisner* and *Harvey Award* nominee *Joe Pruett*. The 160-page hardcover, scheduled for June release, will feature new stories and art by *R.L. Stine, Garth Ennis, Cullen Bunn, Russ Braun, Marguerite Bennet, Juan Doe, Jill Thompson, Sam Kieth, Aaron Douglas, Cliff Richards, Jim Starlin, Larry Stroman, Jamal Igle, Ray Fawkes, Joe Pruett, Kevin J. Anderson, Steve Rasnic Tem, Andrei Bressan, Tony Harris, Francesco Francavilla, Darko Macan, Don Handsfield, Phil Hester, Supernatural* show runner *Andrew Dabb, Tim Bradstreet*, and others. • *Bill Jemas & Axel Alonso*, who both played major roles in Marvel's return to glory in the early and mid-2000s, are



deeply involved with new comics publisher AWA (Artists, Writers, & Artisans). The company will enter the comics market later this year with several titles, including *American Ronin* (by *Peter Milligan & ACO*), *Fight Girls* (by *Frank Cho*), *Archangel 8* (written by *Michael Moreci*), and *Bad Mother* (written by *Christa Faust*).



• Meet *Ash Parsons*, a criminal with the ability to teleport things, in *Trust Fall #1* (by *Christopher Sebela & Chris Visions*). Her family is the foundation of a struggling criminal outfit trying to get ahead in the world, and Ash is able to pop out whole fleets of cars and entire bank vaults. But while she can teleport valuables and her accomplices, she can't teleport herself, making every job a trust fall with her family there to catch her and escort her to safety. It's a perfect setup... but as things begin to change and the Parsons move up in the world, Ash will find herself pushing back

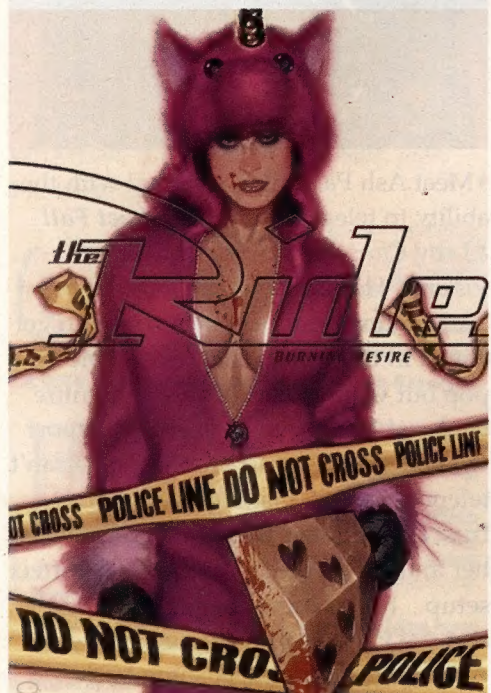
against her golden cage, with deadly results, in this new series from AfterShock. *Trust Fall #1* is scheduled for June release.



## Coming Comics—Image in June

Imagine someone like, say, Mark Zuckerberg created his own army of tech-obsessed teens and directed them to take on the government. What would the fallout be? Charley “Thumbs” Fellows is a member of just such an army. Poor and raised by the influential MOM™ app, he finds himself in the center of a war in *Thumbs #1* (by Sean Lewis & Hayden Sherman).

After serving a hard 15 years in prison on a murder plea, former Atlanta PD detective Samantha Vega now makes her living as a bouncer at an



exotic dance club in *Ride: Burning Desire #1* (by Doug Wagner, Adam Hillyard, & Adam Hughes). But life on the outside isn't easy, especially when enemies have scores to settle...

In *Sonata #1* (by David Hine, Brian Haberlin, & Geirrod Van Dyke), two cultures clash on a planet they each believe is their Promised Land. The Rans are a peace-loving people, but the Tayans are a race of warriors who seek to colonize and control. The mysterious Sleeping Giants also call this place home, though no one knows if they're monsters or the gods of legend. And amidst all this, a young woman named Sonata is willing to break all the rules to find her place in this world—and she's not about to let sleeping gods lie.

Image collected editions include:

- *Hardcore Volume 1 TP*, collecting *Hardcore* #s 1–5.
- *Heavy Liquid TP*, collecting Paul Pope's five-issue series.
- *Monstress Volume 1 HC*, collecting *Monstress* #s 1–18.
- *Hit-Girl Volume 4 TP*, collecting *Hit-Girl Season Two* #s 1–4.



- *Ice Cream Man Volume 3: Hop-Scotch Melange TP*, collecting *Ice Cream Man* #s 9–12.
- *Murder Falcon TP*, collecting *Murder Falcon* #s 1–8.
- *Man-Eaters Volume 2 TP*, collecting *Man-Eaters* #s 5–8.
- *Mirror: The Nest TP*, collecting *Mirror* #s 6–10.
- *Outcast by Kirkman & Azaceta Book 3 HC*, collecting *Outcast by Kirkman & Azaceta* #s 25–36.

Back in December, we presented the 28th annual *CSN Red K Awards*, a blend of commendations and critiques dedicated to pointing out some of the best and worst of the past year. At the end of that feature, we encouraged you, our readers, to send us your own Red K Awards for the best and worst of 2018—and that's just what you did! So let's take a look at what our readers had to say!

## The “Only the Batman Who Laughs is Smiling” Award Grim Superheroes

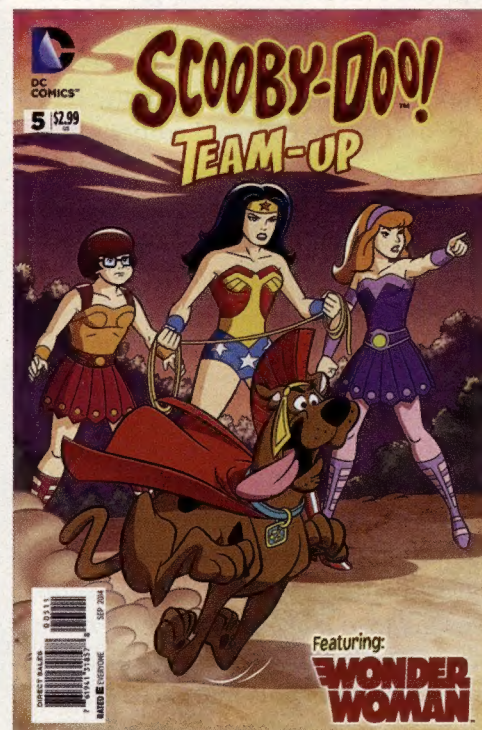
“Remember when you thought how great would it be if you yourself could be Batman? Or if you could really run as fast as the Flash? Nowadays, no one really wants to be their favorite costumed hero, anymore. Why? Because the comic book heroes themselves are not having a good time. Everything is dank, dark, and depressing. The four-color palette of most books now seems to consist of grey, dark grey, red (for blood), and black. The upcoming DC miniseries *DCEased* was described by its writer as being ‘even more brutal on DC’s heroes than his *Injustice* comic.’

Nothing seems sadder than reading the fantasy heroes you looked up to, get dragged down, again and again and again.”

—Vincent Bellizia

## The “Giving Credit Where Credit Is Scooby-Due” Award Scooby-Doo! Team-Up

“In the current state of the industry, most modern comics are lucky if they see 30 consecutive issues. Well, the dynamic and underpraised creative



team of S. Fisch, D. Brizuela, F. Riesco, and company have continued strong and steady with a rotating cast of characters since 2015—and they're now approaching their 50th issue!...”

—Anton Lamont

# COMIC SHOP



# READERS' A



## The “Gorram” Award Firefly from Boom! Studios

“Josh Whedon's beloved but short-lived space western *Firefly* migrated from Fox TV to Dark Horse comics, where it eventually went off-track. But we're three issues into a revival from Boom!, and writer Greg Pak has recharged the series.”

—Jack Dumpert

## The "Age-less" Award

New Age of DC Heroes

"Well, that was a whole lot of nothing. These series were supposed to be artist-driven, but most of the

## OP NEWS

original artists bailed within the first few issues. By the end of the year, most of the series were dead (and those that staggered into 2019 seem to have been cancelled, with the exception of *The Terrifics*, which used established DC heroes rather than new characters). Maybe that says something about what readers want..."

—Ric Santiago

## The "Buck Stops Here" Award

Marvel's True Believers \$1 Comics

"Month in and month out, Marvel gives us 10 or more \$1 comics, usu-

## AWARDS

ally connected by a theme. I'll never be able to afford to own *Fantastic Four* #2 or *Amazing Fantasy* #15 or *Avengers* #4 or *Daredevil* #1, but thanks to this line of bargain reprints, I can experience the joy of buying a copy of these books off the comics racks without wrecking my budget."

—Ken Dozier



Comic Shop News



## The "Testing Her Metal" Award

Taarna

"I haven't read a lot of *Heavy Metal*'s comic line. However, this title, in both writing and art, really brings back the spirit of the character from the 1981 *Heavy Metal* movie, showing Taarna as the woman of few words but lots of action she truly is."

—Tony Bowers

## The "Write Stuff" Awards

DC's Storytelling Stars

"Bendis on *Superman*, Grant Morrison on *Green Lantern*, G. Willow Wilson on *Wonder Woman*, and Kelly Sue DeConnick on *Aquaman*. Hmm...it's like DC realized that putting good writers on their most popular titles was a good idea!!! Who'da thunk it??"

—Tony Bowers

## The "Bon-Gone" Award

Bongo Comics

"The home of *The Simpsons* comic books, Bongo showed true awareness of the needs of comic book fans. They gave us some important issues of Bart Simpson's favorite superhero, *Radioactive Man* (such as #1000). They ended Bart Simpson's comic book series with #100. But why did they cancel the flagship title *Simpsons Comics* with #245? Just five more issues and you can go out with a big #250...."

—Alexander Herge

## The "History Sometimes Repeats" Award

Alter Ego

"Roy Thomas is doing more than anyone else in comics to preserve the history of the medium. Not only does he

publish outstanding interviews with creators, but he also has published transcripts of important convention panel discussions involving Golden, Silver, and Bronze Age comics. A lot of great information has been shared at panels, but until now you had to have been there. Thanks to Roy, all of us can learn more about the history of comics..."

—Gabe Ingram

## The "Give Us Lieber-ty" Award

Larry Lieber

With the deaths of *Stan Lee* and *Steve Ditko*, *Stan's* brother *Larry Lieber* is one of the last members of the original bullpen who is still with us. (Editor's note: *Joe Sinnott*, who recently retired as inker of the *Spider-Man* comic strip, is the other surviving member of the original bullpen.) I hope that *Larry* will put together an 'I was there' insider's history of *Marvel Comics*; as the man who co-wrote a lot of those early *Marvel* comics, including the first appearance of *Iron Man*, he undoubtedly knows more about *Marvel's* early days than any other living creator."

—Gerald Steinhauser

## The "That Didn't Take Long" Award

Marvel Comics

"So *Marvel Comics* took a break from flooding the market with first issues just long enough to conveniently celebrate anniversary issues with *Legacy* numbering before returning to the old policy of flooding the market with first issues?!"

—Steven Solomon

## The "SHIELD Yielded" Award

Steranko's *Nick Fury & Captain America Artist's Edition*

"How can an all-reprint book miss its deadline by three years? The time readers have waited for the second *Steranko Artist's Edition* exceeds *Steranko's* entire tenure on *SHIELD*!"

—Kelly Reinert

## The "Not So Merry" Award

Merry Men

"Razzberries to publishers who publish a few issues of a limited series, then cancel the rest of the issues and expect us to buy a trade paperback if we want to get the whole story. If a publisher is going to do that, it should have to let us trade in the published issues for credit against the cost of the trade paperback rather than making us pay twice for the same material."

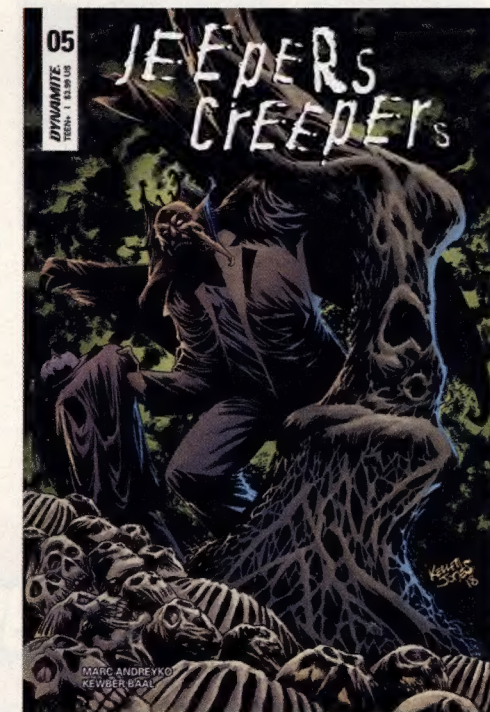
—Michael Seabolt

## The "Holding the Line at \$2.99" Award

Todd McFarlane's *Spawn*

"Thank you, *Todd McFarlane*, for keeping *Spawn* at \$2.99 when everyone else is charging \$3.99 or \$4.99 for a standard comic. As a reader since *Spawn* #1, I can tell you that I really appreciate it, and it makes it much more likely that I'll buy the regular cover and the variant covers for each issue because they're more affordable."

—Kim Ciccarelli



## The "Jonesing for Kelley" Award

Kelley Jones art

"2018 has been a great year if you are a *Kelley Jones* fan, from his covers on *Jeepers Creepers*, *Pumpkinhead*, and *Battlestar Galactica*, to his one issue of *Star Wars Adventures*, his completing the final issue of *Frankenstein Alive*, *Alive!* for *Bernie Wrightson*, and his final work with *Len Wein* on the *Swamp Thing Winter Special*. But best of all was his return to drawing *Batman* on the *Kings of Fear* miniseries."

—Marc Cawiezel

## The "It Is Good To Begin Well; It Is Better To End Well" Award

ElfQuest

"On February 28, 2018, exactly 40 years to the day since its very first publication, *Wendy & Richard Pini's* groundbreaking, incalculably influential, and far-too-undersung graphic novel series *ElfQuest* came to its conclusion with *The Final Quest* #24. It is no understatement to say that *ElfQuest* is very literally a fundamental cornerstone in the history of modern comics publishing... It was *ElfQuest* that first broke the "mainstream bookstore" barrier (at least in America). That most bookstores now

feature a “graphic novel” section can be directly attributed to the Pinis’ work—that section did not exist before *ElfQuest*. They were there first—they led the pack. And the story itself has been remarkably consistent in both content and quality—even some meandering side-stories in the ‘90s all made worthy contributions to the whole of the epic.

“The Pinis have never taken the easy path, and their creation is all the better—and richer—for it. And though they have made it clear that there are still more tales to tell in the *ElfQuest* world, which they will guide, shepherd, and oversee, their primary vision has been fulfilled from first to last, and the weight is off their shoulders. (Now maybe the movie will finally get made...)”

—ttnh721@gmail.com

### The “Two Weddings and a Funeral” Award

Marvel and DC

“In 2018 we got the Batman wedding (great build-up but no consummation) and Ben Grimm’s nuptials to Alicia Masters (weren’t they already married? Or was that Johnny? Isn’t one of them a Skrull? Never mind...). We also got the death of Daredevil story that came out at the same time as the solicitations for the *Daredevil* reboot. Maybe they could try something new in 2019 to generate buzz? Weddings and temporary deaths may not have the appeal to readers they used to have...”

—Mike King

### The “Hal to the Chief” Award

The Green Lantern

“Until now, I really didn’t understand why anyone particularly liked Green Lantern comics—too many characters, too cosmic, and too confusing. But



Grant Morrison’s *Green Lantern* makes me appreciate the character; this is a hero who deserves to be ranked up there with Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman.”

—Cindy Miller

### The “Share and Share Alike” Award

Disney’s Marvel and IDW

“Does anyone else find it odd that Disney shells out millions to purchase the largest publisher of comics, then asks a smaller competitor to print said publisher’s characters (directed at a younger age set)? And why have Disney character comics and *Star Wars* comics also published by IDW, instead of Marvel? Will the Mouse be looking to absorb them as well?”

—Vincent Bellizia

### The “Oh Oh Seventh Heaven” Award

James Bond 007

“Dynamite is giving James Bond fans everything they could ever want in a comic: a serious James Bond who isn’t an anachronistic cliché, well-rounded updatings of classic Bond villains, and storylines that aren’t just ripoffs of James Bond movies. Greg Pak has made *James Bond 007* the first book I read every time a new issue is released. Considering how many comics I buy every week, that’s pretty impressive.”

—Frank Becker

### The “Thinking Outside the Box” Award

Illustrated Comics Storage Boxes

“I love the new boxes that feature images of Harley Quinn, Batman, *The Walking Dead*, X-Men, Avengers, and other comics series on the outside of the box. It’s great to be able to store some of my favorite series in something more unique than the plain white boxes that have been the norm up until recently. I hope more comics companies begin doing this.”

—Lisa Elliott

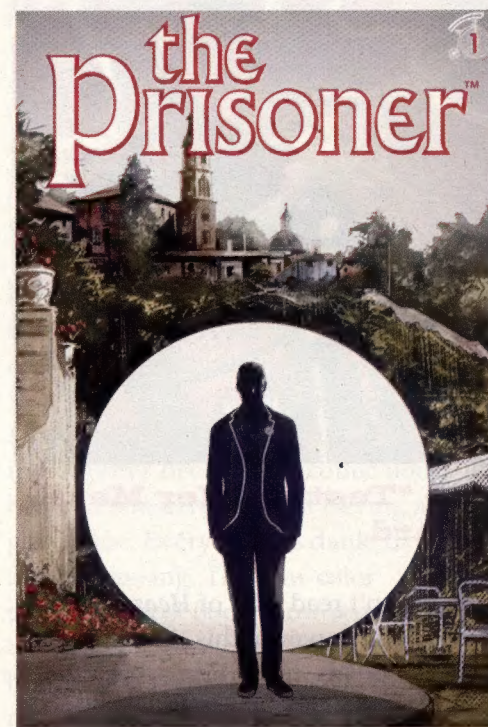
### The “Black and White and Read All Over” Award

Marvel’s Essential Line and DC’s Showcase Line

“I really miss these two affordable reprint lines. They were both in black and white and were printed on cheaper paper, but that was okay because I could get more than 500 pages of great comics for about 20 bucks. They were so cheap that I would buy one or two to take on a vacation trip or a work trip or a long flight, just to give me something

to read. I didn’t mind if they got beat up, because I could just buy another copy. Comics really need more \$20 collections that offer hours of entertainment like this; a lot of people would be willing to give up color to get this much entertainment for such a great price.”

—Joe Gresham



### The “It Takes The Village” Award

The Prisoner: The Uncertainty Machine

“Peter Milligan & Colin Lorimer did a fascinating job updating the classic 1960s cult show for the 21st century without losing any of the flavor of the original ideas behind it. Patrick McGoochan would have been pleased...”

—Tony Bowers

### The “Penile Reform” Award

Batman: Damned #1

“Given a chance to kick off an innovative, sophisticated mature readers line in Black Label comics, Brian Azzarello & Lee Bermejo instead gave us juvenile and unnecessary genitalia images, which made the new line and comic in general look pretty sophomoric. Great work, guys, really great...”

—Tricia Knobloch

### The “Too Many Tricks and Few Treats” Award

Dynamite Comics’ Halloween Specials

“Dynamite solicited five *Halloween Special* comics for October but only released two of them before October 31st. Specials were to include *Bettie Page*; *Red Sonja*; *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark*; *Army of Darkness*; and *Vampirella*. Sadly, only *Army of Darkness* and *Vampi* appeared on time.

Come on guys, no one wants to read a Halloween-themed book in December!”

—Marc Cawiezel

### The “Green Weenie” Award

Savage Dragon

“Not sure why Erik Larsen decided he had to transform his superhero series into a porn comic, but I am one reader who did not appreciate the change. At least he freed up four bucks a month in my budget to try other comics...”

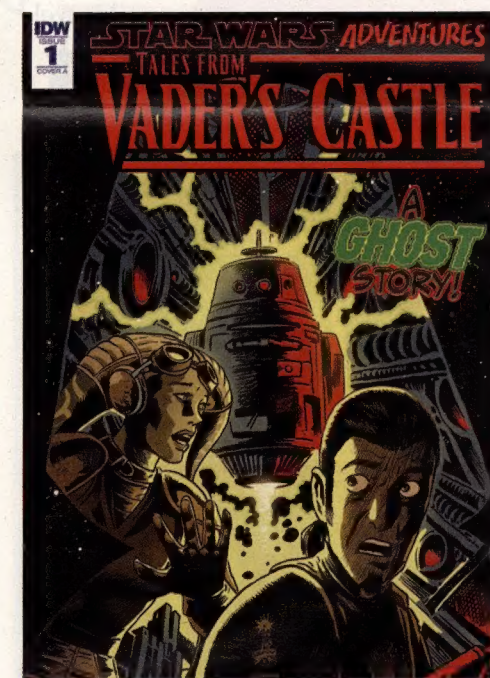
—Ashley Byrom

### The “Peter Parker Is Truly an Orphan” Award

The Deaths of Steve Ditko and Stan Lee

“Originally, Peter Parker was a teenager raised by his aunt and uncle after the death of his parents. But in 2018, Peter Parker’s real parents—Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, the men who co-created Spider-Man and produced 41 incredible comics chronicling his adventures (*Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Amazing Spider-Man* #s 1–38, and *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #s 1 & 2)—both died within a few months of one another. Everyone who loves superhero comics should mourn the loss of these two creative parents who gave us so much and reshaped superhero comics forever.”

—Timothy Kaler



### The “Two Tastes that Taste Great Together” Award

Star Wars Adventures: Tales from Vader’s Castle

“Who would’ve thought that horror/Halloween and Star Wars could work so well together? We found out this year when the weekly five-issue series *Star Wars Adventures: Tales from Vader’s Castle* came out from IDW. Stunning covers and super fun stories with a spooky theme that all tied together [made] for a fun read for all ages. This needs to become an annual thing.”

—Mark Cawiezel

## The "More Than Two Bits" Award

Almost Every Comics Publisher

"In 1960, minimum wage was \$1.00, and comics cost 10¢. You could buy 10 comics with one hour of work. In 1980, minimum wage was \$3.10, and comics cost 40¢. That would get you 7.75 comic books. Today minimum wage is \$7.25, and comics cost \$3.99. That gets you 1.82 comics. DC may have spoiled me with their too-short-lived \$2.99 pricing, but it's not hard to see why fewer people—and especially fewer kids—are buying new books each Wednesday. Please keep the comic book market and my bank account healthy by returning to a \$2.99 industry standard!"

—Steven Solomon

(Editor's Note: It should be noted that Alterna Publishing continues to offer a line of comics priced at \$1.50 per issue!)

## The "Gone To Ellison Wonderland" Award

Harlan Ellison's Passing

"Harlan Ellison could be as cantankerous and stubborn as any person you could meet. But he was without a doubt a true talent and a staunch supporter of comics as an art form. He will be missed."

—Tony Bowers

## The "Keeping the Pressure on the Editors" Award

Batman: Damned #1

"Forget the whole issue with male frontal nudity: Are editors clueless or afraid of actually editing? Anyone who's taken a basic health class should know that 120/86 is a blood pressure reading, not a heart rate—but apparently that's news to the creators and editors of this comic!"

—Michelle Freeman



## The "Dan the Man" Award

Dan Jurgens

"I know that everyone was excited to see Brian Bendis take over *Superman* and *Action Comics*, but I was sad because it meant that *Dan Jurgens'* run on *Action* was coming to an end. Dan wrote some of the best Superman stories published in the 21st century, and he restored Superman to his position of prominence in the DC Universe. Without his *Superman: Lois and Clark* series, there wouldn't have even been a Re-birth Superman as we came to know him. If we can get several different Batman and Justice League comics set in different continuities, why can't we get one high-quality *Dan Jurgens Superman* title, even if it doesn't link to current continuity?"

—Roger Harwell

## The "Omni-Busted" Award

Out-of-Print Omnibus Editions

"Try to find affordable copies of *Colossal Conan* or *X-Men* by Lee & Kirby Volume 1 or *Thor Omnibus Volume 1* or *Silver Surfer Omnibus Volume 1*, and you'll also find that you might need a second mortgage to afford them! When books like this are getting hundreds of dollars on the collector's market, you'd think that publishers would want to do a new printing so that they could make some of that money instead—and then maybe those of us who aren't rich could still afford to get some

of these books."

—Bobby Glancy

And there you have it: the best and worst of 2018, according to you, our CSN readers! Thanks to everyone who submitted nominations, and we wish we had room to offer something from everyone (you might be surprised to learn how many comics or creators were spotlighted in six or more different *Red K* submissions, so some of the awards that made the cut actually represent the sentiments of many other readers as well). And look for us in late December, when we'll do it all over again for 2019!

(Special recognition goes to Tony Bowers, who submitted more Red K Awards than any other reader this year, beating out long-time contributor Vincent Bellizia by two awards and Marc Caviezel by four. We were



not able to include all of their awards in this issue—we wanted to include some of the best that our other readers had to offer, too—but we certainly look forward to seeing what Tony, Vincent, and Marc have to say each year!)

# SAVE THE DATE!

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# THE GRAVE

